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United States Senate

October 18, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

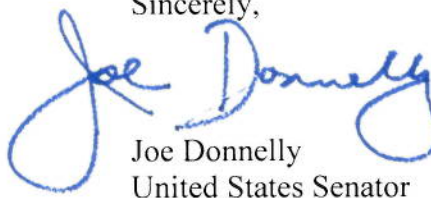
As you know, opioids and heroin continue to ravage many areas of our country. Overdose deaths are now the leading cause of death for Americans under 50, a statistic compounded by the influx of fentanyl and carfentanil, which are even more potent than heroin. In order to stem the tide of this epidemic, we need to take significant actions at the federal, state, and local levels. We do not have time to waste, as we are already years behind in this fight.

I was proud to support the bipartisan Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) and 21st Century Cures Act, which were signed into law last year. These laws were a step in the right direction towards expanding access to prevention and treatment options across the country; however, there is still much more work to be done.

This Congress, I have introduced legislation with Senator Lisa Murkowski to help alleviate the shortage of treatment providers by incentivizing providers to practice at substance use disorder facilities, particularly in rural and underserved areas. I have also partnered with Senator Pat Roberts and Senator Luther Strange to introduce two bills that aim to expand facilities and telehealth resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery services in hard-hit rural areas. Further, I believe that we can take common sense steps to improve our ability to interdict illegal drugs coming across the Southwest border and through the mail system by ensuring that our ports of entry are fully staffed and that U.S. Customs and Border Patrol has the technology and resources needed to test shipments as they enter the U.S.

I was encouraged when you indicated in August that you planned to declare the opioid epidemic a national emergency, because I believe you understand the seriousness of this crisis. I urge you to follow through with your plans to direct significant federal resources towards this issue. To that end, I stand ready to work with you and your Administration on a comprehensive approach to addressing the opioid epidemic that includes prevention, treatment, recovery, and enforcement strategies. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you or your staff would like to discuss ways that Congress and the Executive Branch can partner to advance these efforts.

Sincerely,



Joe Donnelly
United States Senator